

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/960,297
Preliminary Amendment dated August 26, 2003
Reply to Office Action of February 26, 2003

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending in the application, with claims 8 and 9 having been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 2 4 and 5 have been amended herein. Claims 10-13 have been added.

Allowable Subject Matter

At the outset it should be noted that claims 5 and 6 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Taking the Examiner's comments into consideration, claim 5 has been amended to include all the limitations of base claim 1, thereby placing claim 5 in independent form. Via this amendment claims 5 and 6 are allowable.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §112

Claims 2 and 4 are rejected under 35 UC §112, first and second paragraphs, as the claimed invention is not described in such full, clear, concise and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to make and use the same and/or for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Taking the Examiner's comments into consideration, claims 2 and 4 have been amended. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 2 and 4 under 35 UC §112, first and second paragraphs, is respectfully requested.

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/960,297
Preliminary Amendment dated August 26, 2003
Reply to Office Action of February 26, 2003

Claim Rejections under 35 §102

Claims 1 and 7 are rejected under 35 USC §102(a) as being anticipated by Dickinson.

Dickinson describes a crank bearing, as illustrated in figure 2, having an inner ring (20) an outer ring (21) and a number of antifriction elements (22) sandwiched between the two. In addition, a flange structure (17) is attached to the outer ring (21).

The present invention patentably distinguishes over Dickinson in that a supporting part (or supporter) protrudes in the direction of the rotational axis and is coaxial with the rotational axis of the inner and outer rings. Accordingly, a third member can be supported coaxially with first and second members by the supporting part.

Therefore, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the prior art relied upon by reciting,

"A bearing structure, comprising: an inner ring; an outer ring coaxially disposed on the outer periphery of said inner ring; a rolling element rollably sandwiched between said inner ring and said outer ring; a supporting part integrally formed with and protruding axially from at least one of said inner ring and said outer ring; wherein, said inner ring being capable of supporting a first member on its inner periphery; said outer ring being capable of supporting a second member on its outer periphery in a relatively rotatable manner to said first member; said supporting part being capable of coaxially supporting a third member and also being integrally and coaxially rotatable with said at least one of said inner ring and said outer ring, wherein said supporting part protrudes in a direction of a rotational axis of the bearing structure and is coaxial with a rotational axis of the inner and outer rings." (Emphasis Added)

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1 and 7 under 35 USC §102(a) as being anticipated by Dickinson is respectfully requested.

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/960,297
Preliminary Amendment dated August 26, 2003
Reply to Office Action of February 26, 2003

Conclusion

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

ARMSTRONG, WESTERMAN & HATTORI, LLP



George N. Stevens
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 36,938

GNS/plb
Atty. Docket No. **010617**
Suite 1000
1725 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 659-2930



23850

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Q:\HOME\GSTEVENS\01\010617\preliminary Amendment august 2003.doc